

# Reflecting on the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa Journey:

Lessons learnt from the capacity-building  
activities and stories of success



This project is funded by the European Union



Covenant of Mayors  
in Sub-Saharan Africa

## About CoM SSA

The Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) is an initiative launched by the European Union (EU) to support local authorities in Sub-Saharan Africa in their fight against climate change and in their efforts in ensuring access to clean energy. Started in 2015, the initiative is shaped by local authorities for the local authorities to reflect the local context and specifics.

Under the CoM SSA, local authorities are invited to make a voluntarily political commitment to implement climate and energy actions in their communities and agree on a long-term vision to tackle 3 pillars, namely access to energy, climate mitigation and climate adaptation.

In order to translate the political commitment into practical measures, CoM SSA signatories commit to produce and implement a Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plan (SEACAP).



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# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the lessons learnt, institutional knowledge gained and many successes achieved during the first four years of the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA). This reflective piece focuses on the capacity-building work package of the initiative. It attempts to track the teething challenges and lessons learnt as the initiative has grown and developed. Imparting this knowledge will help inform the future of this initiative and guide the increasing international focus on climate, energy and development in Sub-Saharan Africa around capacitating local municipalities.

## Project Background

After the adoption of the 2020 European Union Climate and Energy Package in 2008, the European Commission launched the Covenant of Mayors – a voluntary programme set up to engage and support mayors in achieving the European Union’s climate and energy targets. The programme promoted a bottom-up approach and was based on multi-level stakeholder engagement.

Due to the programme’s success, in 2015 the European Commission launched the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) initiative. Local governments were encouraged to make a political commitment to implement climate actions to combat climate change, and sustainable energy actions to improve access to energy. To translate the political commitment into practical measures, CoM SSA signatories voluntarily commit to produce and implement a Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plan (SEACAP).

In June 2016, the Covenant of Mayors entered an important new phase of its history through a merger with the Compact of Mayors. The resulting Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) for Climate and Energy is the largest movement of local governments committed to charting their own course in terms of climate change work, within the national government framework. In line with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and climate justice principles, the GCoM for Climate and Energy tackles three key issues: climate change mitigation, adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change and universal access to secure, clean and affordable energy.

As one of the regional arms of the GCoM, the CoM SSA draws on the strengths of a worldwide multi-stakeholder movement and the technical and methodological support offered by dedicated offices.

## Evolution of the CoM SSA initiative

**2015**

Launch of the CoM SSA initiative, funded by the European Union and implemented by 10 African and European organisations

**2016**

Establishment of the help desk Officer in Accra, Ghana; publication of the Political Commitment Document

**2017**

13 signatory cities get dedicated support for pilot projects and drafting SEACAPs

**2019**

More than 200 African cities are signatories; first SEACAPs are finalised; initiative gains new partners (GIZ, AFD, Expertise France and AECID)

**Late 2019**

Publication of guidelines on developing a SEACAP by the Joint Research Centre (JRC)

**2020**

Implementation of SEACAPs starts in 15 cities (phase III)

## Overall objective

A key objective of the first four years of the CoM SSA was to capacitate Sub-Saharan African (SSA) cities to:

- Provide access to sufficient, sustainable and safe energy to urban and peri-urban populations.
- Build their adaptive capacity.
- Consider and implement low-carbon solutions.

A key driver of the initiative is to enable local low-emission, climate-resilient, equitable and sustainable development so that cities can both respond to and mitigate against the impacts of climate change, while ensuring access to clean energy.

## Expected results

- The capacities of SSA cities are strengthened to enable them to set up and use efficient planning and implementation tools and action plans for their energy, mobility and/or spatial organisation.
- SSA cities develop SEACAPs.
- The legal and institutional framework of local governments is improved, as is their technical and resource mobilisation capacities.
- Political ownership is taken of the initiative and best practices are adopted by SSA cities, due to dissemination through networks of cities under the extended and revised Covenant of Mayors initiative, and in synergy with other initiatives.

## Why the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa?

In the years before the initiative started, cities were increasingly being seen as key to addressing the climate change agenda. However, it was only after COP 21 in Paris in 2015 that cities were placed at the forefront of implementing climate action.

Globally, we are seeing an exponential growth in urbanisation. Today, SSA is the fastest growing region and will continue to be so well into the future. The region's urban population is believed to have increased more than sixteen-fold between 1950 and 2018, and the urban population growth rates are expected to remain at or above 3% per year through 2035–2040 (UN, 2018). Consequently, this high urbanisation rate is expected to be one of the main drivers of energy growth, with total primary energy demand on the continent growing by 2% per year between 2018 and 2040 (IEA, 2019). Demand will grow even faster in urban centres, with models showing that final urban energy demand could grow fourfold by 2040 (Stone et al., 2020). This, coupled with the fact that much of the core infrastructure has not yet been built, provides the region with a significant opportunity to orient its growth along a more sustainable path (REN21, 2019).

Cities are also key from an adaptation perspective as they house most of the world's population, often in densely populated environments. About 70% of SSA's urban population lives in slums, contributing to making it one of the region's most vulnerable to climate change and climate variability. This situation is aggravated by the interaction of multiple stresses, occurring at various levels, and low adaptive capacity. Hence, SSA cities are central to our ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change, and reduce negative impacts on the greatest number of people.

Access to modern energy remains a key priority in SSA to reduce poverty and support economic growth. It is also the region with the lowest access rate to electricity and clean cooking facilities. Access to electricity is low, at 32%, and the predominant energy source remains biomass even in urban areas. SSA cities are, therefore, key to piloting and driving the uptake of innovative energy access solutions.

Given the successful role that the Covenant of Mayors played in Europe and the many challenges in SSA, it was clear that a project of this nature could be highly beneficial. These factors, in part, drove the emergence of initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors in SSA.

**Access to modern energy remains a key priority in SSA to reduce poverty and support economic growth.**



**Africa's population** is expected to **nearly double** to **2 billion** people between 2010 and 2040, potentially reaching **3 billion by 2070**

(UN-Habitat, 2019)

**Poverty** is widespread with **70%** of **Sub-Saharan Africa's** urban population **living in slums** (World Bank, 2019); this is expected to continue well into the future. Access to **electricity** is low, at **32%** (16% rural, 59% urban), power outages are common.

(World Bank, 2019)

**Urbanisation** rates in Sub-Saharan Africa are **among the highest in the world**, and UN-Habitat predicts that **more people** will be living in **urban areas** in the region than in **rural areas** from **2040** onwards

(UN-Habitat, 2019)

The primary **energy source** in the region (except South Africa) remains **traditional biomass**, with almost **80%** of the population relying on this source for cooking

(World Bank, 2017; OECD/IEA, 2017)

# Building blocks of the initiative

Discussions about the CoM SSA began early on in 2014 and an initial proposal for the initiative was formulated by COP 21. The initiative was well poised to do good work. As this report will show, the initial phases of the initiative achieved some level of success, but as with the start of any initiative of this size, there are clear lessons that can inform the next phase of work. The lessons and success stories presented are borne out of four years of work and have a particular focus on the capacity-building and technical support<sup>1</sup> offered.

## Structure of the project

The CoM SSA is an initiative funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) under the Development Cooperation Instrument of the European Union.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), a European association of local and regional governments from 41 European countries, was contracted to manage the initial two phases of the initiative over a four-year period. It was assisted in implementing the initiative by a consortium of 10 organisations.

The consortium partners were as follows: Climate Alliance (CA), Environment Development Action in the Third World (ENDA), Energy Cities (ENC), French Agency for Environment and Energy Management (ADEME), ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability – Africa (ICLEI Africa), ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability – World Secretariat (ICLEI WS), Portuguese Energy Agency (ADENE), Sustainable Energy for Africa (SEA), and United Council of Local Governments Africa (UCLG Africa).

The initiative was overseen by an advisory board and ran from December 2015 to November 2019, with an extension until 31 May 2020. The partners were responsible for six work packages:

- WP1: Overall project coordination by CEMR.
- WP2: Central help desk; UCLG Africa.
- WP3: Adaptation from CoM Europe to CoM SSA on local energy planning process; CA and ENC.
- WP4: Institutional framework, political advocacy and networking; ICLEI WS and UCLG Africa.
- WP5: Assistance to develop capacity in SEACAPs; ADEME and SEA.
- WP6: Management of knowledge, outreach and dissemination; ENDA.

The intention of the CoM SSA initiative was to select pilot cities that would receive funding and support from WP5 partners to develop their SEACAPs.

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1. This report was drafted by WP5 partners; therefore, our experience and lens is one of providing capacity-building and technical support to signatories.

The European Commission launched the call for proposals from cities in the region in December 2015. Cities had until March 2016 to submit a concept note. In February 2016, four workshops were held in the region (Cape Town, Nairobi, Dakar and Praia) to explain the context and content of the initiative. Thirteen pilot cities were selected and received funding and support for the duration of the project. This report is the story of the support they received and the lessons learnt.

Since its inception, more than 200 cities have signed up to the CoM SSA from over 36 countries across the region. Some of these cities have also benefited from technical support from WP5 to develop their planning processes and SEACAPs.

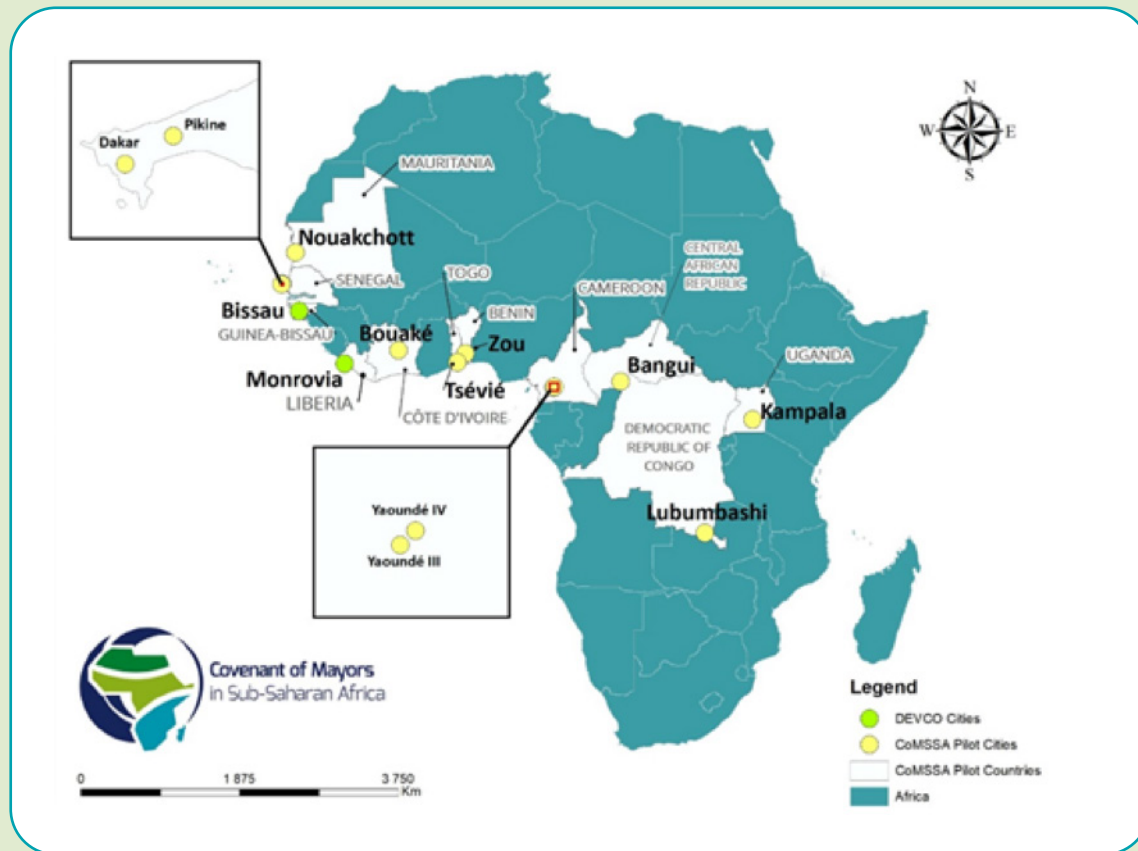


Figure 1: Map of the 13 pilot cities



## Capacity-building and technical support to signatories

While the CoM Europe only focused on adaptation and mitigation, the CoM SSA initiative took into consideration the deep challenges facing the region at the outset, introducing a third pillar: access to energy.

Over the past four years, WP5 partners have supported the pilot cities in developing SEACAPs, provided capacity-building, training and technical support, and assisted in data collection. Following our belief that the role of local intermediary organisations is key to strengthening the capacity of municipal partners, technical sessions (workshops, webinars and online meetings) were organised to build the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) as well. WP5 partners provided capacity-building support as follows:

- Conducted inception visits in each pilot city.
- Hosted a number of workshops with pilot and non-pilot cities that, among other topics, dealt with community-scale data collection for a baseline emission inventory, access to energy assessment and risk and vulnerability assessment, as well as target setting and action planning.
- Developed a simplified data collection guide that outlined a 10-step approach to collecting data for a baseline emission inventory, as well as a brochure about assessing climate change in African cities, based on the experience of pilot and signatory cities.
- Undertook peer reviews of terms of references for all three SEACAP assessments and emerging technical studies/reports.
- Organised a series of online webinars to address data collection challenges. This was also an opportunity for cities to learn from peers that were further along in the process, like Kampala.
- Organised two technical training workshops with CSOs working with the pilot cities.
- Developed energy futures modelling reports for five cities.
- Provided remote support on an ad hoc basis to most of the pilot cities in the form of email correspondence, virtual meetings and phone calls.

# Lessons from the first four years of the CoM SSA

This section summarises the main lessons learnt over the course of the project under three key areas pertaining to the CoM SSA initiative and the capacity-building work undertaken by WP5.

## Approach to building local government capacity



### LESSON 1: Greater involvement of African partners

Although African partners were included in the proposal development, the end product and final proposal outline (overall building blocks of the initiative) would have benefited from input and contextualisation from African partners earlier on in the formulation process. This could have shed light on ways in which the CoM Europe model could be better adapted to the southern (SSA) context through the rich experience of the African partners.

A few years into the initiative, the need for greater involvement of African partners became evident as demonstrated through the extensive consultation processes organised by the JRC in developing the SEACAP guidelines. We believe that the success in contextualising the guidelines, thus making them relevant for SSA cities, is due to these many engagements. This sentiment for a more contextualised approach was also felt within the consortium with Climate Alliance and Energy Cities, which receded part of their budget to profit the African partners.



### LESSON 2: Peer-to-peer learning is key to enhancing a community of practice

One of the key successes and strengths of the CoM SSA initiative is its ability to bring African cities and stakeholders together through a shared goal. The various workshops conducted during the first four years of the initiative not only provided essential technical inputs to develop a SEACAP, but also gave CoM SSA signatories the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences. This led to successful communication through channels such as WhatsApp groups. These groups, sometimes formed by signatories themselves, enable the CoM SSA focal points to communicate on a regular basis, thus forging a strong community of practice across SSA despite language barriers.

A WhatsApp group was formed after a technical workshop for Portuguese-speaking CoM SSA signatory cities was held in Cape Town in September 2019. The CoM SSA focal points of these cities continue to regularly share news and updates related to the CoM SSA, and particularly the SEACAP development, through the WhatsApp group.



### LESSON 3: Build on the local expertise and local support organisation to ensure sustainability

Evidence from even the best resourced cities in SSA shows that they are only able to make slow shifts towards energy sustainability and resilience, despite having strategies and institutional capacity focused on such a transition. For most of the pilot cities, the energy and climate change space was still very new. This, added to the lack of capacity (technical and human), posed a serious challenge for Cities to undertake such work.

In our view, the sustainability of initiatives such as the CoM SSA should be built around a structured workstream facilitated by a local intermediary organisation such as a non-governmental organisation, academic institution or civil society organisation with energy/resilience research, implementation and/or capacity-building experience. The involvement of a local intermediary is important as it facilitates broader capacity building beyond just municipal staff, and ensures that approaches and solutions are generated locally rather than from foreign expert input, which inevitably lacks the deeper local context. The intermediary organisation should in turn be supported as necessary by external organisations with experience in local government capacity building.

## Flexibility



### Lesson 1: Efficient implementation requires the necessary tools

It was clear at the outset of the project that consortium partners had different approaches and methodologies. This was felt at an even greater level within WP5, which had the task of assisting cities with data collection tools and methodologies. However, as the project unfolded and a better situational analysis of the cities emerged, it became clear to each partner what the most appropriate tools were and how the project could leverage on each one's experience.

The late completion of the SEACAP guidelines impacted on the implementation of WP5's technical support to the cities. An earlier attempt to address this setback resulted in the publication of a simplified data collection guide by the WP5 partners, which outlined a 10-step approach to collecting baseline emission inventory data. This was successful in giving some cities

like Tsévié and Bouaké a head start in completing their baseline emission inventory assessments. Finalisation of the SEACAP guidelines in late 2018 greatly enhanced WP5's technical support, with tangible results by the end of May 2020 – six SEACAPs finalised and three reporting templates completed and submitted to the JRC.

It is therefore important that DG DEVCO and CEMR, in assessing the success of the project, take into account the various processes and nuanced changes in the project goals that impacted on the speed of delivery. The nature of this kind of work and the fact that it is spread over several years immediately affect the set log frame of deliverables. The project needs to be organic and respond to the context in which it is being rolled out. In our view, as highlighted in the SEACAP stories and the lessons exchange workshop below, the CoM SSA project was successful and could be bolstered with tools such as theories of change.



## LESSON 2: Data is sparse in SSA cities

Data is critical in providing a status quo picture of resilience, energy access and emissions for a city. This is even more important for the purpose of the energy futures modelling exercise, which was a deliverable of Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA). However, our experience working with pilot cities over the past four years showed that data is very sparse in the region, and in many instances, the SEA team had to revert to using proxy data<sup>2</sup> to complete the city-wide modelling scenarios. We deemed this sufficient to input into the models.

In addition, a number of the cities opted to work with consultants to develop their SEACAPs. Key considerations and lessons for cities working with consultants in the future are to make sure that the city owns the data at the end of the contract; to write into the terms of reference that consultants must train city teams in the methodology that they use to conduct data collection/technical exercises; and to make sure that there is sufficient institutional knowledge in the city at the end of the exercise so that future iterations can be done in-house.



## LESSON 3: Implementation in SSA is challenging

Although this should not be news to anyone, it is important to emphasise some of the challenges that the partners and cities face in implementing projects of this nature. Added to the data sparsity highlighted above, many of the pilot (and signatory) cities were in remote regions of SSA and some had security issues (like Bangui) which made travel impossible. Therefore, travel for the partners was often onerous, for example, flying for 34 hours to reach a city for a three-day inception visit. Travel within Africa is unfortunately notoriously difficult, and this should be taken into consideration when designing project work plans.

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<sup>2</sup> This is available energy data from a city that may be used to reconstruct the energy picture of another city.

In addition, making contact with city officials was not always easy as internet and phone access in many of the cities was difficult. This meant that setting up webinars or other remote technical sessions was equally problematic. Innovative ways to work remotely in Africa, despite being challenging, is an area that should be focused on going forward – even more so with the recent health crisis around Covid-19.

Project teams were also faced with changing political climates in the countries that they worked in. This meant that political buy-in was not necessarily sustained after project inception. While Dakar, for example, managed to secure high-level political support by having the mayor as the president of the steering committee, the situation was quite different for Pikine. It was reported that communal mayors of Pikine each expected a share of the European Union grant to implement the CoM SSA project in their communes. When they later understood that the project implementation and budget were centrally managed by the municipality, they withdrew any sort of political support from the project.

## Clarity



### LESSON 1: Key role of the help desk and the secretariat

Initially, the pilot cities were not informed of the existence of the consortium and, therefore, the capacity-building programme via WP5 partners. This resulted in early delays, as some cities were not responsive, and even tensions with city teams, as in the case of Lubumbashi. Furthermore, lack of open communication with DG DEVCO resulted in WP5 partners often not having the right city contacts for setting up the inception visits. Once these challenges were acknowledged and raised with the consortium, the help desk and the secretariat (CEMR) helped in the mediation process by sending introductory emails to the cities and sourcing the right contacts from DG DEVCO.

Although WP5 managed to establish privileged links directly with the cities over the four years of the project, the central role of the help desk and the secretariat helped in the quick and easy dissemination of resources and logistics for on-site events. This was particularly helpful in the run-up to the second regional workshop on energy profiling, greenhouse gas accounting, risk and vulnerability assessments and climate finance. The workshop was tailored to individual cities' requests, based on exhaustive interviews with all the pilot cities, and facilitated by the help desk.

## Stories of success

Despite the many challenges surrounding the CoM SSA initiative, as outlined above, it is clear that this project was successful in many aspects. Some cities and civil society organisations (CSOs) showed exemplary ambition and leadership to heed the call to act and develop or support the development of a good SEACAP. This section revisits the approaches they adopted, the lessons learnt and the results achieved. It offers valuable information for other cities, CSOs and donors interested in replicating their best practices.

CSOs involved in the project have shown a commitment and availability to be key partners in the implementation of the climate and energy access policy development both with pilot and signatory cities.

At the inception phase we tried to ensure that there were representatives from CSOs; however, this was not always guaranteed. Over the course of the project, the role of civil society stakeholders increased significantly. Through our ongoing engagements with them, they shared their experiences of working in the field with the communities and expressed their willingness and availability to work with the CoM SSA project. To this end, we provided an overview of the purpose and challenges of developing SEACAPs and the support they could offer cities.

Through these connections, we organised field visits to see projects undertaken by CSOs during the inception phase. We hosted webinars and capacity-building workshops with the CSO representatives. In some cases, documents were developed identifying concrete actions that CSOs could take to support the CoM SSA signatories.

CSOs such as OPED (Tsévié), ONG Citoyen Responsable (Bouaké), EVE (Pikine) and Uhai Lake Forum (Kisumu) have engaged in climate change and energy actions and developed good practice guidelines, which were shared with the cities and CoM SSA partners on the local authority platform library.

In this section we highlight two best practice case studies in relation to the work with CSOs in the cities of Tsévié and Dakar.



## Tsévié, Togo

Unlike several other municipalities, Tsévié municipality adopted the innovative approach of outsourcing local expertise to develop its SEACAP. Established in 2011, L'Organisation pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable (OPED) is a non-governmental organisation based in Togo that offered to take up the challenge and support Tsévié in producing its SEACAP. OPED's involvement in the SEACAP process is depicted in Figure 2.

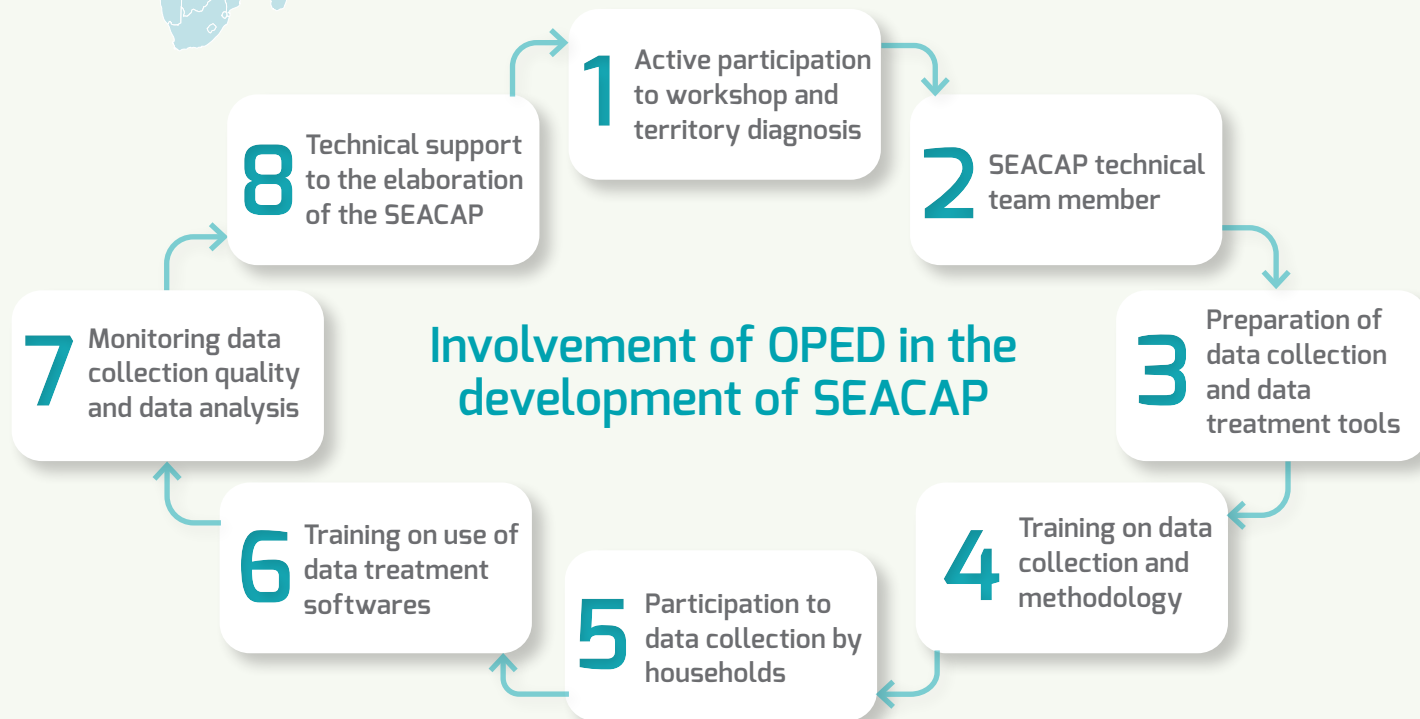


Figure 2. OPED's involvement in developing Tsévié's SEACAP (Source: OPED, 2017)

Working with a local intermediary organisation like OPED helped generate local data for Tsévié. This resulted in a strong partnership built with the local municipality, which is crucial in providing long-term support and improving the capacity of municipal staff, particularly given that this is a new space for them.

OPED's involvement in the SEACAP process had the following positive outcomes:

- Good-quality data. Given its knowledge and understanding, OPED was able to provide quality training for the data enumerators and rapidly identify data gaps and outliers.
- A SEACAP that speaks to the local context. OPED's involvement helped Tsévié identify the links between energy and climate, impacts on health, quality of life and the development of the local economy.
- Local capacity built. OPED attended several capacity-building sessions organised by the CoM SSA, which helped build its capacity and bring local knowledge to the workshops.



## Dakar, Senegal

Dakar took important steps to strengthen its climate action work. Recognising the importance of the participatory and inclusive process of climate-energy planning, the city of Dakar, through its Plan Climat Energie Territorial, sought to create a new dynamic around citizen engagement in and participatory governance of climate action through an intervention and communication strategy that has enabled the involvement of all spheres of the community within city boundaries.

As a result of the capacity-building activities organised with the pilot cities and their CSOs, Dakar was able to learn from its peers about innovative ways of communicating and engaging with citizens on climate change issues.

To this effect, Dakar rolled out a remarkable communication strategy with the aid of the highly influential Badienou Gokh cooperative, a well-known CSO in Senegal. Generally used as intermediaries between families, wives, girls and husbands, and health centres, the Badienou Gokh are neighbourhood godmothers, trusted women who advise and guide in matters of sexual life.



To ensure citizen engagement at the community level, Dakar capitalised on the significant role of the Badienou Gokh by appointing them as focal points, or “green referents”, in order to bring the message about climate issues to the most disadvantaged and “less educated” communities. The Badienou Gokh were able to break down moral and cultural barriers by adapting Dakar’s communication strategy to the communities. The Badienou Gokh work at the grassroots level and are thus better equipped to develop information that is language sensitive and capable of reaching the target audience effectively and more quickly.



Figure 2. Community engagement in Dakar (PCET, 2018)

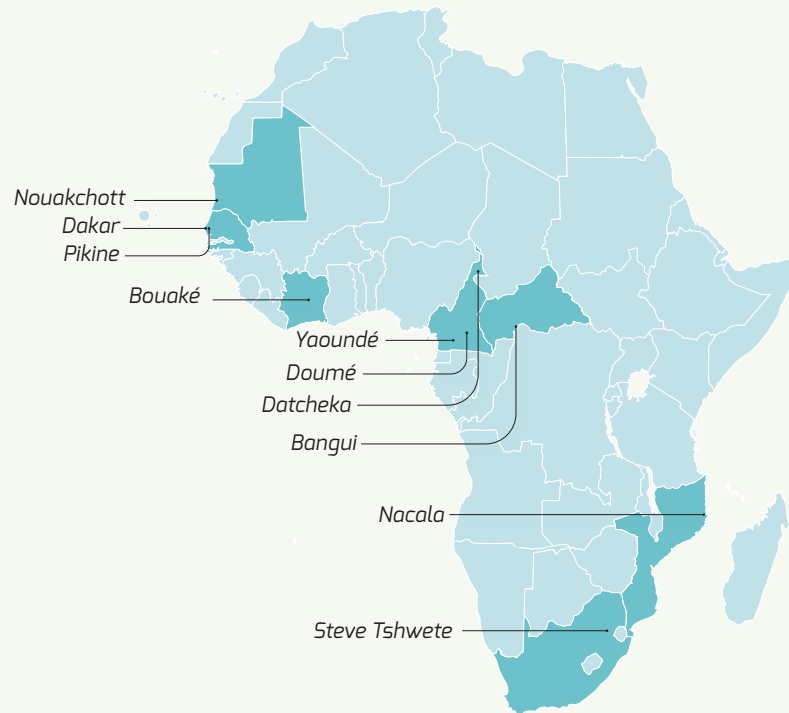
## The deep-dive SEACAP workshops

An extension of three months was granted in order for the African partners engaged in WP5 to promote the development of SEACAPs in 11 selected cities (some pilot and some signatories).

As has been noted above, the late completion of the SEACAP guidelines, slow administrative processes, the lack of human resources and technical capacity within the cities, and the fact that the project was itself new and innovative all contributed to most cities lagging behind in terms of deliverables, especially the SEACAP. In addition, the WP5 team faced many challenges, outlined above, which impacted on this deliverable.

Once the extension was granted, the team (SEA, ICLEI Africa and ENDA) embarked on an ambitious journey of holding one-on-one SEACAP-focused technical workshops with selected cities. These included:

- Bouaké (Côte d'Ivoire)
- Yaoundé III (Cameroon)
- Yaoundé IV (Cameroon)
- Doumé (Cameroon)
- Datcheka (Cameroon)
- Bangui (Central African Republic)
- Dakar (Senegal)
- Pikine (Senegal)
- Nouakchott (Mauritania)
- Nacala (Mozambique)
- Steve Tshwete (South Africa).



The intention was to focus on the technical aspects of the SEACAP, as well as completing the SEACAP template. The team worked with small groups of city officials who had been engaged in the project since inception. These officials had participated in several capacity-building workshops and webinars and received ad hoc remote support. As a result of these one-on-one workshops, six cities were able to finalise their SEACAPs (Tsévié, Yaoundé III, Yaoundé IV, Doumé, Datcheka and Bangui). At the time of writing, three of them (Yaoundé IV, Bangui and Dakar – only the mitigation pillar) had submitted the SEACAP template to the JRC.

Furthermore, the last push during the extension phase allowed the cities of Dakar, Pikine, Nouakchott and Steve Tshwete to complete one or more sections of their SEACAPs. Dakar recently finalised its vulnerability risk assessment, Pikine and Nouakchott finalised all three assessments, and Steve Tshwete completed the energy access section of the SEACAP template.

Bangui was the last city to receive an inception visit, in April 2019, due to prior political security concerns and directives from the government. Despite being the last pilot city to start developing its SEACAP, Bangui successfully managed to complete its action plan and submit the reporting template to the JRC by March 2020. It is clear that Bangui benefited from the fact that the SEACAP guidelines and the JRC reporting template had already been completed before it embarked on developing its SEACAP; this was not the case for the other pilot cities. In addition, by the time we ran this inception visit we had more experience with the SEACAP process. These two factors meant that we were able to better guide the city in the SEACAP development process and provide a clearer understanding of the specific SEACAP requirements. This could be one of the reasons why Bangui's SEACAP was completed rapidly and comprehensively.

## Lessons exchange workshop

In the final lessons exchange workshop held in Cape Town, the cities identified several key lessons, namely the need for:

- More political support
- Greater awareness of the issues
- Behavioural change
- Institutionalising and mainstreaming climate action into city planning mechanisms
- Developing and building skills and capacity from within
- Reliable data.

The cities were clear that they benefited from the support they received from the CoM SSA project and identified the need for the support to continue. They also highlighted the benefits they received from sharing experiences with other cities. An interesting observation was that the time frames to develop SEACAPs were problematic. : In some cases in Europe, the CoM initiative took longer to implement in various cities than the CoM SSA initiative, which was asked to be implemented in four years, meaning African cities had less time to develop and complete their SEACAPs. Cities were very clear about the need to build on the successful pilot actions and activities by providing further technical and financial support in the implementation phase of action plans. An important lesson was the need to consider adapting the SSA data requirements of the SEACAP process to take into consideration the data resources available within the region. However, for many city officials the question was: what next?

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the report findings, it is clear to the WP5 team that the European Union supported and continues to support an incredibly innovative, much-needed and respected project. The initiative achieved some level of success over the first four years, given the teething challenges, delays and time it took for the relationship building and other processes to unfold. The extension deliverables are evidence that if projects of this kind allow for an organic process while remaining accountable, they will see good results.

Key recommendations for the initiative as it continues to grow and evolve are as follows:

- Focus more resources on the capacity-building aspects of the project, which will greatly assist in implementation.
- Continue to provide a platform for signatories to share knowledge and best practices and support each other in their climate change journeys.
- Ensure continued training workshops, particularly where support organisations are able to spend time and “deep-dive” with cities.
- Ensure that there are organisations present to support cities as they move toward climate action and increasing their access to energy.

It is further recommended that a full review of at least one pilot city that received support during the first four years of the CoM SSA be undertaken. The purpose would be to determine the challenges, gaps and needs of the cities going forward with specific reference to implementation. We know that the climate agenda is urgent. Given that there is much work happening at the city level, it would be beneficial to really understand what support cities in SSA need to take their next steps.

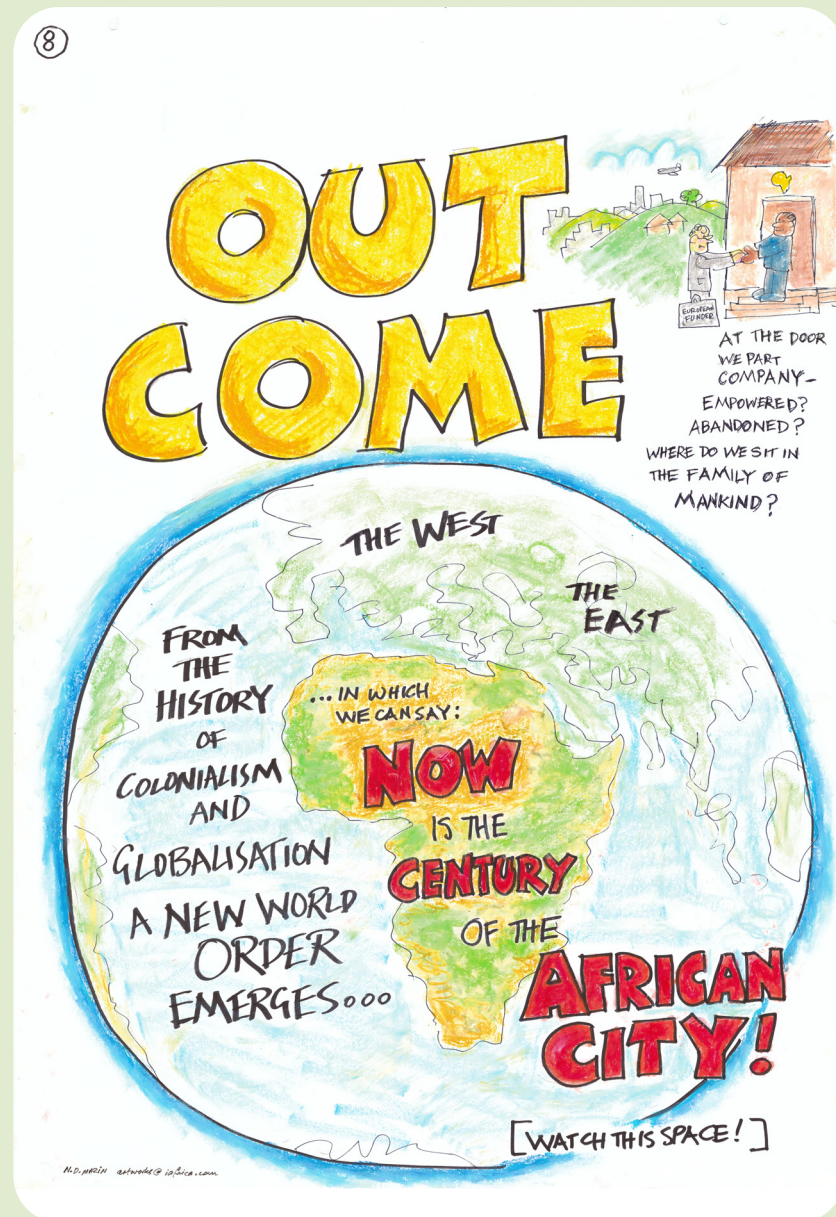
Such an evaluation should be undertaken in a developmental manner. By this we mean not based on log frames, but rather a

more holistic approach that considers the context and what is happening within the chosen city, identifying where it has been able to make progress and what could have helped more. The evaluation should consider the proposal put forward by the pilot city to the European Union, the report from the inception visit, and what the city has achieved to date. Interviews with relevant city officials could be held to understand what would help them achieve their targets, where the support is needed and where the gaps lie. An important question to ask is whether the SEACAP template has been adapted sufficiently to the SSA context or whether there are areas that need to be further reviewed.

Over the course of the last few years it has become increasingly clear that there are many players in this field and an alignment of funding programmes and institutions would be an added advantage in taking the project forward.

It is strongly recommended that cities be obliged to include a local support organisation in future calls and that any funding they receive would be available for such support. Other examples of work in SSA have shown this approach to be very successful. In addition, placing someone within the city may assist in building capacity and sustainability.

In summary, this initiative has produced and continues to produce much success across the SSA region. This is only the beginning, as this initiative is a critical platform to support African cities in building their resilience and increasing their access to sustainable energy. Much more work is required and we thank the European Union, through DG DEVCO, for its continued support.





CoM SSA is a Regional Covenant of



**GLOBAL COVENANT**  
*of MAYORS for*  
**CLIMATE & ENERGY**

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